DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 333 078 UD 028 101

AUTHOR Wirt, Frederick M.
TITLE The Institutional and the Personal in Explaining Cognitive Outcomes under Desegregation: A Mississippi Test.
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Analysis of Variance; Blacks; *Citizen Participation; *Desegregation Effects; Elementary Secondary Education; Females; Institutional Research; Males; *Racial Attitudes; School Desegregation; Self Esteem; *Social Attitudes; Student Educational Objectives; Whites
IDENTIFIERS *Mississippi (Panola County)

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the comparative utility of institutional and personal qualities in explaining cognitive outcomes in self-esteem, racial attitudes, and political and social involvement in the context of desegregated schools. Three kinds of schools in a Mississippi county were studied: public desegregated, public segregated black, and private segregated white. A range of behaviors and attitudes about self and one's role in the school, community, and political systems was measured for 1,240 students in grades 6, 9, and 12, forming the dependent variables. The independent variables were hypothesized to be both institutional (type of school) and personal (race, status, maturity, sex, and interest in pursuing education). The type of institution was not the best predictor of cognitions and behaviors, nor was race or status. The strongest influence was the presence of an interest in schooling among older students, especially females, a group that is active, liberal with regards to race and gender, efficacious politically, and possessing a high self-esteem. Both races in desegregated schools had more racial contact and more positive racial attitudes than those in segregated schools, but the type of institution did little to predict self-esteem and political and social involvement compared to the much stronger influence of students' personal qualities. Seven tables and 22 references are included. (CJS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

THE INSTITUTIONAL AND THE PERSONAL IN EXPLAINING COGNITIVE OUTCOMES UNDER DESEGREGATION: A MISSISSIPPI TEST*

ED333078

Frederick M. Wirt
Department of Political Science
University of Illinois-Urbana

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

*Appreciation is expressed to the Spencer Foundation for funding the field trips and survey analysis, to the school executives of the county studied for their cooperation in administering the tests, and to Dawn Owens for computer consultation provided at the Social Quantitative Laboratory, University of Illinois.

Paper prepared for delivery at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, Chicago, April 3-7, 1991. This is revision of a paper presented to the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, August 30-September 2, 1990.

UD 028 101

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

F. Wirt
U. of IL, Pol. Sci.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the comparative utility of institutional and personal qualities in explaining cognitive outcomes in self-esteem, racial attitudes and contact, and political efficacy of students. These were studied in three kinds of schools in a Mississippi county: public desegregated, public segregated black, and private segregated white. Six behavioral and cognitive sets of cognitive outcomes provided by 1,240 students in grades, 6,9, and 12 formed the dependent variables. The independent variables were hypothesized as the institutional (type of school) and the personal (race, status, maturation, gender, and schooling interest; which better explained cognitive differences? Analysis proceeded via t-tests and regression equations.

The paper finds that institution predicted far less of the student scores than did personal qualities, particularly, maturation (older students with more political efficacy and self-esteem), gender (females scored higher), and schooling interest (better students scored higher). But race and status predicted much less than hypothesized. While differences in institutions did predict greater racial contact and attitudes supportive of black needs, they did little to predict self-esteem and political efficacy.

THE INSTITUTIONAL AND THE PERSONAL IN EXPLAINING COGNITIVE OUTCOMES UNDER DESEGREGATION: A MISSISSIPPI TEST

The Institution as a Research Focus

The renewed interest of political science in the state as a shaping institution has focused upon its consequences for policy and process in political systems (Nordlinger, 1981; March and Olsen, 1984; Almond, 1988; Nordlinger et al., 1988). That institution has been usually defined as the national state whose independent effects upon the life of society are the focus of study. But this orientation may well apply also to subnational governments, and this paper tests that possibility among a Southern county's school districts. However, little of this research has dealt with another aspect of institutional life, namely, the difference that institutions make for the cognitions and affects of those who live in or under them. This paper's central theoretical point for evaluation is that institutions operate within an influencing network of values and attitudes which condition their effects.

The focus of such theory is upon three conceptual elements of any institution: the institution itself, its environmental context, and its consequences in action and cognition. Consequently, this paper tests one institution--schools--amid different local subcultural contexts in order to determine the effects of both upon self-esteem, racial attitudes and contact, and political efficacy of the young. Such a test requires focus on an institution that has limited feedback from its clients and that demonstrates some variation in types. The first requirement permits testing for independent effects, and the second for variation effects. School systems meet these criteria. They are famous for ignoring--while serving--their clients--students--and they come in varieties of public-private, organizations, size, and resources. One variety is the degree of racial desegregation. Clearly, schools that are desegregated or not are two institutions with not only a common concern (schooling for

literacy and numeracy), but also with strikingly different motivational bases and basic missions.

The central research questions about these institutional influences are two. What influences do different kinds of desegregation have upon not simply academic outcomes (usually stressed in popular and scholarly writing), but upon other kinds of cognitions. I focus upon three: self-esteem, racial attitudes, and political efficacy. A collateral interest in student behavior led to asking about effects upon racial contact and community activity. If differences do exist among these different institutions, are they better explained by other attributes of students that are personal? Consequently, we test the cognitive and behavioral effects upon students when their schools are either desegregated or segregated in a seemingly homogenous rural county in Mississippi.

The Research Setting

The onset of desegregation in the South and elsewhere produced an "exit and voice" reaction: some whites fled to private schools, often religiously based, while other whites stayed in a desegregated public schools. A little noted but third variation also developed, namely, mostly black public schools which whites had fled. It is as if Southerners everywhere in their local school sytems came up with a set of tracking channels that resulted from the interaction of federal law with the private sector--all amid an emotional storm centered on white reactions to schooling with blacks. The question is what the outcomes were for these students.

My research interest focuses upon these three kinds of school institutions in Panola County, Mississippi (35,000) currently being studied for developments in civil rights over the last two decades (Wirt, forthcoming; 1970). This county has shared the forces of social and legal change found elsewhere in the South (Black and Black, 1987). It has also shared the dual white culture that this

region has known traditionally (see articles under "Mythic South" in Wilson and Ferris, 1989, 1097-1145).

Thus, North Panola had been "Delta culture": big commercial farms, agrarian elites ruling all social institutions, and an economic exploitation of blacks quite close to feudalism--and sometimes to peonage (McMillen, 1990, 140-50). South Panola, on the other hand, had been "hill culture": small farmers (mostly white, but some blacks) and town merchants and lawyers who held all power. In both areas, however, the unchallenged attitudes of white supremacy and the cruel reality of widespread poverty prevailed for both races. The county, like the state, had been, in James Silver's precise term, "the closed society" (1964).

When federal civil rights law to Panola came after 1964-1965, the strength of these two cultures filtered the responses (Wirt, 1990b). The Delta culture delayed change, while the hill culture--especially the white merchants--accommodated much more, especially in education. After the usual protests, three schooling institutions developed quickly. Delta whites fled the northern county schools near them to create a small, private all-white system. The blacks remaining were left with a very poor, large, segregated, public system, with whites in administrative positions until recently; now all are black. In the southern hill culture, school desegregation took place after some protests and evasions; currently, there is a white superintendent but principals of both races.

In summary, the schooling institutions that Panola devised took the form of three tracks:

1. All-white North Delta: small, well-to-do parents, high in academic achievement (measured by state test scores, school completion rates, college-bound graduates).

2. Mostly-black North Panola public schools: large, very poor parents, and lowest academic achievement in the entire state in 1988.

3. Racially-mixed South Panola public schools: large, poor-to-moderate income of parents, and intermediate between other two in achievement.

A Theory of Institution and Context

What theoretical reasons would explain why these three Panola institutions would have significant differences even in the common task of schooling? That theory lies in the differentiating effect of **context,** that is, the force of environment upon bounded institutions. Three categories of context, developed more fully elsewhere (Wirt, 1990a), are crucial in any analysis of the mediation of institutional effects.

First, theory would suggest that seemingly similar institutions may have different "missions," namely, core goals of desired results to which institutional leaders' efforts are directed. Thus, the similar goals of Panola's three school systems (e.g., teaching literacy and numeracy) are differentiated by different missions. As elite interviews confirm, leaders in the private white school stress academic excellence, while the public schools deal with educational handicaps arising from a racial context.

A second theoretical contextual factor is the range and volume of "resources" available for an institution to accomplish their missions. The major categories of resources are finances, personnel quality (including leadership), and materiel. Thus, Panola's private school possessed more finances, drawn from its richer plantation families, that brought it better trained teachers and more classroom materials. The much poorer black public school, however, lacked all these resources because of its poverty-laden family constituency.

A third contextual influence that theoretically could mediate institutional effects is "community quality" which has two aspects--expectations and consensus. That is, the community's expectations about its schools regularly shapes their behavior; that is, personnel and program are designed to "fit" those expectations (as a long and familiar research tradition holds, e.g., Peshkin, 1978; 1990). Thus, in Panola the private white school had wealthier parents with higher expectations of academic quality, as well as fearful expectations about black contact. Also, the degree of political consensus affects what an institution can do to achieve its goals. Leaders of these three school systems in this county (and elsewhere) faced differing consensus contexts. As elite interviews confirm, there was consensus in the white academy, apathy in the black public schools, and conflict in the desegregated schools. Each context shaped how superintendents dealt with their missions (on superintendent strategies more generally, see Wirt 1989).

Research Design

Such variations in this setting facilitated the research design to test two research questions. Were cognitions and actions of students indeed different among these institutions, and did other factors account for any differences? These two questions are conceptualized with the dependent variables as patterns of attitudes and behavior among students (cognitive outcomes), and the independent variables as institutional versus personal explanations of observed variation in these outcomes. These formulations need elaboration.

The Dependent Variables: Student Cognitions and Behaviors

A range of behaviors and attitudes about self and one's role in the school, community, and political systems was constructed. As my emphasis is upon "range," and not a single variable, the approach incorporates numerous dimensions of outcome behavior and

cognition. These dimensions were measured by a set of scales of strong reliability, as follows:

1. Behavior in 22 possible modes:
   a. Discuss public problems (N items = 4; alpha .539).
   b. Volunteer activity in community (N=6; alpha .562).
   c. Racial contact in school and community (N=11; alpha .528).

2. Racial Composite, drawn from behavior and attitude items in other scales (N=15; alpha .510).

3. Attitudes:
   a. Race-Gender liberalism (N=8; alpha .717).
   b. Self-esteem (N=17; alpha .702).
   c. Political efficacy (N=10; alpha .624).

The last three sets of Likert-scales require elaboration. The eight items in "race-gender liberalism" act as scales of students' attitudes about the roles of working versus home parents, as well as equal job, pay, and educational opportunities for females and blacks. The seventeen items in the "self-esteem" scale tap attitudes about: whether one's own efforts or other factors more likely shape life; a sense of self importance; and school affect; all these were drawn from the beyond-high-school research. Finally, the ten "political efficacy" items, familiar in the political science literature, explore one's importance in voting, politics, and governmental activity. All items above, except1a, 1b, and 3a, are drawn from standard research, and hence are reliable instruments (see alpha scores).

In giving these tests, school administrators and teachers in these three institutions of Panola County cooperated fully. In two days in mid-May 1989, 1,240 students in grades 6, 9, and 12 in these school system completed this test. It reached all students in these grades except one 6th grade of the several in South Panola. Supervision by their teachers greatly assisted my oversight when

facing classes of hundreds of students squirming on the last day of school.

The Independent Variables: Institutional and Personal

It is important to provide a non-falsifiable test of the alleged institutional effects, and for that purpose this research has set a wide net of competing independent variables to explain differences in cognitive and behavioral effects. These are sketched below.

If **institution** has its alleged effects, then each school system should have a distinctive set of cognitions due to differing missions (see earlier) and distinctive attitudes among school personnel that would affect students differentially. If so, then there would be cognitions that are distinctive with each school type. Alternatively, a set of personal qualities are also hypothesized as shaping those attitudes in ways that overcome institutional effects. If so, then there would be similar cognitions among different institutions that are keyed to one or more personal qualities.

Race is the first of these personal explanations of cognitive outcomes; the cultures of the two races, one hypothesizes, shape these outcomes in ways that do overcome institutional differences. However, **class or status** is another familiar hypothesis about the shaping of attitudes, here measured by parental occupation.[1] **Maturation** is a third explanation. The evolving nature of the young's cognitive world, particularly so for political efficacy (Weissberg, 1974), may find differences more associated with age than with institution. Consequently, student age is captured by their grade levels of 6, 9, and 12.

A subtle and rarely studied aspect is the degree to which **schooling interest** influences cognitions. This attitude may be generated by the family, or it may arise independently from the intrinsic value that the student finds in intellectual matters. It is

measured here in two ways: success in past schooling (reports of one's overall grades) and interest in future schooling (plans to enter college or not). Neither measure taps motives that may underly this schooling interest (e.g., intellectualism versus job opportunities), but these motives are not necessary here. Nevertheless, theory suggests that a schooling interest, however motivated, may operate independently of other student qualities, or even of the schooling environment, to shape cognitions and behavior.

Finally, in the emerging interest in the role of **gender** in the political system, it would be useful to explore the gender parity in political cognitions found in earlier studies (Jennings and Niemi, 1974; Sigel and Hoskins, 1981, 123). There may be some distinctive quality of gender socialization which shapes a view of self and role expectations in the systems of school, community, and state.

The analysis now turns to testing these explanations of cognitive differences, exploring the first analytical question. That is, are there actually cognitive and behavioral differences among these three educational institutions that have emerged in this county?

Cognitive Differences among School Types

The first part of Table 1 provides a first and positive answer to the presence of institutional and personal differences among these school types, especially

(Table 1 about here)

the race, maturation, and school interest explanations. Indeed, all these were significant for political efficacy and the race composite score (except college plans). The schooling interest scores were significant for all student scales except racial contact, as was school type for all but the race composite measure. Clearly, then, the institutional explanation is insufficient on its own to explain

these cognitive outcomes, and the personal explanation has the same problem.

These multiple effects come together in the desegregated schools of South Panola. Table 1's second part explores whether race might have effects (holding age constant) in the one school type with both black and white students. The degree of significant results based on race that are reported here was enough to indicate that factors other than the institutional were at work. Consequently, regression analysis was employed to predict the relative influences of these two sets of explanations. In order to uncover institutional effects, scores from both the segregated black and the desegregated school were compared with those from the segregated white school; each result is to be read "as compared with the segregated white schools." The results appear in Table 2 and a summary of the significant signs in Table 3.

(Table 2 and 3 about here)

The **institutional** explanation emerged here with mixed utility. The desegregated schools do predict more racial contact (hardly surprising); segregated black schools do predict more volunteer activity than segregated white students, and both school types predict lower self-esteem than that found for segregated whites. However, institution predicts none of the two political atatitudes, efficacy and race-gender liberalism. This mixed finding suggests other factors are operative, and indeed, personal variables emerge as better predictors; these are reviewed in order of increasing explanatory power.

The **status** measure of occupation is quite weak, predicting for only one scale (volunteer activity). Given the range of occupations that students report (see footnote 1), the limited predictive ability of this measure may be traceable to its true lack of influence, which contradicts much contemporary research on

family influences on schooling; or it may be that students simply misunderstand their parents' work.

Race predicts somewhat better, as blacks predict positively for volunteer activity and race-gender liberalism, as well as negatively for political efficacy. By inference, then, whites are more efficacious but less liberal; that possibility is strengthened by the fact that this finding persists through all subsequent analysis. The positive prediction of blacks on liberalism is not surprising because half these items are about blacks; also, the lower prediction for blacks on self-esteem fits other results in the literature (Krause, 1983). The means for racial contact were higher in the desegregated than in the two segregated schools. That should not be surprising, but what is was the lack of significance on this prediction. The inference is that desegregation causes some racial contact but its range is limited.

Gender is an even better explanation of these cognitive differences, as females predict positively on three and negatively on a fourth scale. This finding contrasts with research over a decade ago onsathat there was little differnce by gender in political cognitions (Jennings and Niemi, 1974; Sigel and Hoskins, 1981). However, the present results suggest that females, while having less racial contact than males, do reach more into community activity, feel more politically efficacious, and hold more supportive attitudes on race-gender issues (not altogether surprising). Add these findings to that for of age (see below), and it suggests the emergence of a more liberal cohort among the county's older female students.

For it is **maturation** or age that is the best single predictor in this analysis, regressing positively on all six scales. These results fit loosely a familiar picture of cognitive development of the political self. With greater age, Panola's students talk more about public issues, volunteer more for community activities, feel a greater self-esteem and political efficacy, and support helping

those persons disadvantaged by reasons of race and gender, Another analysis (Wirt, 1990) finds that with age more students view federal policy as an instrument for societal improvement at home and abroad. While these predictions in Table 2 are stronger for female than male students, it does suggest that school and family have not stamped all of the new generation in the traditional mold of an inactive, racially isolated, and conservative citizenry.

An original dimension to this analysis, **schooling interest,** also emerged as a powerful explanation on most of these scales. Those with college plans and higher grades are positive and highly significant predictors of greater public discussion, political efficacy, self-esteem, and race-gender liberalism; those with college plans also predict positively for greater racial contact. It is unclear whether these attitudes and behaviors tap those who are more intellectual or only those who see education as a vehicle to better careers The first interpretation suggests that schools can open student minds to thinking less traditionally on racial and political matters; the second suggests that upward mobility is a part of thinking more progressively about such matters.

In summary, then, this first analysis finds that it is not institution that is the best predictor of cognitions and behaviors, nor are race or status. Rather, the strongest influence is the presence of a schooling interest among older students, especially females, a cohort that is active, liberal, efficacious, and possess self-esteem. There is here more than a hint of "the best and brightest" regardless of institution or race.

Cognitive Differences among Student Types

It may be fallacious to assume, as this analysis has, that the two races in the desegregated schools act as homogenously as the single-race cohorts in the segregated schools. If race does shape these attitudes, then we may be masking that influence; that possibility was suggested earlier by data at the bottom of Table 1.

Consequently, the analysis was run again but with students now separated into four types: the two single-race, segregated types as before, plus the blacks and the whites separately in the desegregated South Panola system. Again, each type is compared with the segregated white students; Table 4 provides the regression results and Table 5 their summary. Is this refined version of race-school type associated with cognitive differences?

(Tables 4 and 5 about here)

This analytical approach makes race and institution slightly better predictors in Table 4 compared to Table 3 (7 vs. 10 significant Betas). Blacks in both segregated and desegregated schools now seem similar, that is, they are physically and psychologically isolated and exhibit significantly less political efficacy than do segregated whites. Blacks report a lower self-esteem in desegregated than in segregated schools, a finding familiar in other research (Krause, 1983). As for the desegregated whites (compared to the segregated), they report significantly more aspects of their lives are related to race; they have greater racial contact and, on the race composite measure, are more supportive of some attitudes involving blacks. In this respect, then, institution has truly had an influence. But note that this explanation does not improve desegregated whites' political efficacy or self-esteem compared to segregated whites.

However, Tables 4 and 5 again show that personal influences predict strongly in the cases of age and gender but not of status. The influence of age is extraordinary. It again predicts significantly for every dimension of behavior and attitude (albeit only marginally for volunteer activity). The female factor is also strong (significant on four of six dimensions). The new analysis further reinforces reports of females having less contact with the other race or their community, even though their political efficacy and race-gender liberalism are high; this time, however, self-esteem is not significantly predicted by gender. Finally, the influence of schooling

interest remains a strong and positive predictor of most behaviors and attitudes, although not for racial contact.

In short, the effort to refine the race and school types improved the predictions somewhat, but the results still leave the older, brighter, and female students consistently strong predictors of behavior and political efficacy. Status almost disappears in explaining these results. Moreover, the influences of institution and race lead to the grim finding that all blacks--not just the segregated--live with lower efficacy, less self-esteem, and, for those most segregated, less contact with whites.

Difference of Means Analysis of School-Race Types

Another way of examining interactions of institution and race is to contrast the types of students in these schools. It is possible that the previous comparison with only the segregated white schools might confound the interaction between the other three groups. Six comparisons are possible: desegregated whites with segregated and desegregated blacks; desegregated blacks with segregated blacks and whites; and segregated blacks with segregated and desegregated whites. These interactions are analyzed by difference of means tests on the student scales within each pair of school types (e.g., segregated versus desegregated blacks). The test determined which of the two schools in each of six pairs was significantly stronger. Table 6 provides the difference of means tests within each school pair, and Table 7 shows which type in each pair had a significantly higher mean.

(Table 6 and Table 7 about here)

The theory is that a desegregated institution creates a distinctive context for learning that, in turn, produces differences in racial behavior and attitudes. Tables 6 and 7 indeed provide strong evidence to support this theory in all scales but public discussion and volunteer activity. That is, higher racial contact and

racial composite score appear in the desegregated type in eight of the nine pairs that are significant. As the term "desegregate" intends, these students--black or white--had been organized to create greater racial contact than in either of the two segregated cohorts. Moreover, the racial composite score--attitudes and behaviors about race--shows a similar result. While the desegregated white or black scores are not different, each racial cohort scores higher than does its segregated cohort in other schools.

Race-gender liberalism is also affected by desegregation, because these blacks in South Panola score higher than desegregated whites or segregated blacks. Both kinds of whites have weak support on this scale; curiously, segregated whites score higher than desegregated whites and segregated blacks, but not significantly so. This finding that segregated whites have significantly more racial contact and racial liberalism than segregated blacks suggests once again the latter's social and physical isolation in the Delta culture. This is a condition, however, that desegregation has broken for both races in the hill culture of South Panola.

But the institution of desegregation has not affected other cognitions of these students. However, whites in segregated schools have significantly higher self-esteem and political efficacy in all their pairs, while the desegregated whites are similarly higher against both black cohorts. The strength of the finding is that in all eight cases discussed here the significance is .000. There is considerable debate elsewhere over whether desegregated blacks have less self-esteem than do segregated blacks, or over whether the white presence has any influence one way or the other (Krause, 1983). But in this Mississippi culture, desegregation demonstrates little effect on the high efficacy and esteem that permeate the culture of white students. Nor is this simply the result of higher status for whites (see Table 5). Nevertheless, the institutional change has not improved these attitudes; not even the desegregated blacks are different from the segregated blacks.

Summary

While the school district as an institution at first seemed to explain students' political efficacy, other and more personal explanations demonstrated greater strength. Maturation of the student was strongly and regularly associated with all the scales employed, while gender and schooling interest did so even more. As students were filtered through the school's influences, differing institutions accounted for much less effects than did certain personal qualities of the students themselves. However, one independent institutional effect did persist. Both races in desegregated schools had more racial contact and more positive racial attitudes than those in segregated schools. Certainly this finding was the intent of external law, even though desegregation could account for few other differences in cognitions reported here.

Consequently, the findings support the theory that three elements of context--mission, resources and community--act to generate variations in institutional effects. This is why, even in seeming rural homogeneity, a rich variety of student behaviors and attitudes were manifest,. Note that their variety reflects that of adults as they confronted desegregation over the last two decades. Through that period, the force of federal civil rights law clearly changed both students and adults, but the change was splintered by these local contextual factors in the three school types that emerged. Some of these types, particularly the desegregated school, achieved some of the goals of such law, despite a hostile local context. Moreover, the personal qualities of the schools' students even more mediated those effects. Thus it is that institutional and personal factors are interrelated as they adapt to the external impact of law. But in the end, it is the much stronger influence of the personal qualities of students that stand out.

Policy Evaluation Implications

Since its inception, evaluation of desegregation policy has been divisive, and not just because some citizens and politicians attack it for reasons of race or fear of change, or others who support it as a necessary redistributive measure. Rather, the scholarship of evaluation has been rife with analytical questions about guiding theory, relevant hypotheses, appropriate methodology, and implications of findings. In light of such divisions, what does this paper add to the evaluation of this policy?

The first is the strong caution to understand there are more outcomes than just academic achievement that need evaluation. But even here, it is important to understand the increase in achievement for blacks under desegregation if one compares similar cohorts across time. That is not done in this paper, of course, but it is the judgment of local school officials in this county--and the enrollment data back them up--that comparing the first and present black cohort under desegregation, more blacks:

--go further in school now,
--drop out less as a result,
--are exposed to more academic subjects, and
--attend some form of college.[2]

While comparisons with whites in either period will show higher rates, of course, these results for these blacks are far from minor; they suggest an increased value to their lives and an enhanced productivity to the society. For example, Panola County now has a range of professionals--lawyers, doctors, social workers, nurses, engineers, planners, government administrators--that was unknown in the late 1960s (I recall one mortician and one nurse). All local observers of both races affirm that these results would not have taken place had legal desegregation not been enforced. Such time-

---

2

interval cohort analysis is rarely, if ever undertaken, even though all scholars understand that institutional change, like that here, involves measuring effects in the same group over time. If so, we need to direct research to that kind of analysis.

Other outcome measures, however, need to be focused upon. One of these, self-esteem, has indeed been studied, although Krause's (1983) review of that literature raises some problems about it. Not least of these is that so much of the research is focused in cities, where increasingly the comparison of both races within desegregated schools is less likely as the whites become fewer. That is one reason this paper focuses upon this non-achievement cognitive outcome in various local sites. It, too, finds, higher scores among blacks that are segregated than are desegregated, but both have lower self-esteem scores than whites in either school type. But whether this is a weakness in the desegregation policy is not clear as long as time-interval cohort analysis is not possible. It may be significant that the two black cohorts here do not differ significantly on this dimension; that suggests a cultural force, such as a pervasive sense of racial oppression that depresses self-esteem, a force that institutional arrangements may not affect.

Other non-achievement cognitions are rarely studied, however, which makes this paper's attention to political views--efficacy, racial attitudes, and race-gender liberalism--of special interest. Striking is the finding that desegregation affects racial attitudes significantly; wherever a desegregated cohort--white or black--is compared with one that is segregated, racial support scores are higher. That finding is relevant to my thesis about the impact of law. It is not that law changes attitudes but that: 1) it changes reality, 2) thereby creating new living situations for citizens; 3) these new situations develop new perceptions about citizens;and finally, 4) those perceptions can shift attitudes over time.

The political findings in this paper are important. Blacks are less efficacious and more liberal than whites in all comparisons,

and they are more supportive of federal domestic policy (shown in Wirt,1990b). The blacks' weaker efficacy may be a class attribute, as the poor of both races are far less sanguine about their role in the political system (Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Nie et al., 1979). Maybe that changes when blacks become more visible in local office-holding, as a recent study of cities with black mayors has found (Bobo and Gilliam, 1990). Are Panola's blacks more efficacious now, when a few blacks sit on city councils, school boards, and county commissions, than earlier when even registering to vote was an act of great courage? Probably, although comparative data don't exist; yet the comparative registration figures, showing a great growth between the mid-1960s and 1990, infer that today a much greater sense of efficacy lies behind this behavioral trend.

In sum, then, these reflections on evaluating school desegregation policy suggest that we are ill-served by cross-section comparisons, like this, when the true measure of the policy's effect requires time-interval data with similar cohorts. As this section notes, however, what we are left with are studies of a slice of time, and even those can suggest the broader importance of this policy if we expand our notion of institutional outcomes. Even then, as this paper shows, there is a dramatic influence arising from the personal qualities of students. That finding reinforces even more the theoretical viewpoint that understanding school influences requires identifying and studying different outcomes for particular cohorts within the student body.

Table 1
ANOVA Tests of Explanatory Variables: Total and Desegregated Samples of Students(1)

STUDENT SCALES-TOTAL SAMPLE

VARIABLES	Discuss Public	Volun-teer	Racial Contact	Political Efficacy	Racial Score
Race	.650	.263	.000*	. 000*	.000*
School Type	.000*	.015*	.000*	.000*	.484
Age	.243	.180	.000*	.007*	.000*
Report Card	.000*	.000*	.132	.000*	.005*
College Plans	.000*	.000*	.070	.000*	.115

DESEGREGATED SCHOOL SAMPLE

Race, Total	.000*	.002*	.000*	.000*	.993
Race, 6th grade	.105	.124	.000*	.009*	.000*
Race, 9th grade	.653	.745	.000*	.000*	.000*
Race, 12th grade	.727	.214	.000*	.000*	.000*

1. * = significant by T-test, two-tailed, pooled variance estimate.

Table 2
Regression of Student Qualities on Student Scales

VARIABLES	DISCUSS PUBLIC PROBLEMS b	S.E.	B	Sig.	VOLUNTEER b	S.E.	B	Sig.
Occupation	.012	.011	.041	.241	.026	.011	.083	.017*
Female	.032	.029	.036	.272	.077	.030	.083	.011*
Age	.033	.006	.181	.000*	-.004	.006	-.023	.474
Deseg.	-.002	.055	-.002	.967	.095	.057	.096	.093
College plans	.120	.035	.117	.000*	.175	.036	.167	.000*
Report card	.031	.009	.112	.001*	.028	.010	.100	.003*
Black	.049	.037	.054	.179	.039	037	. 042	.300
Seg. Black	-.019	.068	-.017	.784	.137	.070	.125	.049*
(Constant)	.507	.098			.373	.099		
Multiple R .270; R sq. .072.					Multiple R .273; R sq. .075;			
Signf. F .000					Signif. F .000			

	GENDER-RACE LIBERALISM				RACIAL CONTACT			
Occupation	.022	.014	.051	.121	-.009	.008	-.038	.267
Female	.331	.039	.262	.000*	.049	.023	-.069	.035*
Age	.061	.008	.235	.000*	-.013	.004	-.091	.005*
Deseg.	-.018	.074	-.014	.802	.181	.044	.238	.000*
College plans	.103	.046	.072	.026*	.067	.027	.083	.015*
Report card	.041	.012	.106	.001*	.004	.007	.018	.603
Black	.122	.048	.097	.012*	.118	.029	.166	.000*
Seg. Black	-.103	.090	-.069	.250	.051	.053	.060	.345
(Constant)	.023	.128			.763	.076		
Multiple R .408; R sq. .167.					Multiple R .269; R sq. .072;			
Signif. F .000					Signif. F .000			

Table 2, cont'd.

	SELF-ESTEEM				POLITICAL EFFICACY			
Occupation	.007	.011	.021	.533	.000	.012	.000	.991
Female	.002	.030	.002	.940	.159	.035	.135	.000*
Age	.030	.006	.155	.000*	.069	.007	.287	.000*
Deseg.	-.240	.056	-.233	.000*	-.093	.066	-.074	.159
College plans	.138	.035	.127	.000*	.210	.042	.157	.000*
Report card	.077	.009	.263	.000*	.061	.011	.170	.000*
Black	.004	.037	.004	.908	-.152	.044	-.129	.000*
Seg. Black	-.180	.069	-.159	.009*	-.096	.081	-.069	.237
(Constant)	.183	.098			-.439	.116		
Multiple R .401; R sq. .161. Signif. F .000					Multiple R .473; R sq. .223. Signif. F .000			

Table 3
Summary of Significant Regression Results on Student Scales (1)

	STUDENT SCALES					
	BEHAVIOR			ATTITUDES		
	Pub. Talk	Comm. Volunt.	Race Contact	Race-Gender	Pol. Efficacy	Self Esteem
PERSONAL VARIABLES						
Black		+		+	-	
Occupation		+				
Female		+	-	+	+	
Age	+	+	-	+	+	+
INSTITUT-IONAL VARIABLES (Compared to Seg. White):						
-Deseg.		+				-
-Seg. Black	+					-
SCHOOLING INTEREST						
College plans	+	+	+	+	+	+
Report card	+	+		+	+	+

1. Significance at least .05 (most are .00 or better); Beta signs as indicated.

Table 4
Regression of Race-School Types on Student Scales

VARIABLES	DISCUSS PUBLIC PROBLEMS b	S.E.	B	Sig.	VOLUNTEER b	S.E.	B	Sig.
Deseg. Black	.070	.055	.069	.201	.135	.056	.130	.016*
Female	.034	.029	.038	.240	.077	.030	-.021	.010*
Age	.034	.006	.180	.000*	-.003	.006	-.020	.514
College plans	.129	.035	.125	.000*	.173	.035	.164	.000*
Occupation	.014	.010	.044	.196	.021	.011	.067	.049*
Report card	.030	.009	.107	.002*	.031	.010	.108	.001*
Seg. Black	.056	.056	.051	.323	.191	.058	.171	.000*
Deseg. White	.020	.051	.022	.694	.112	.052	.118	.032*
(Constant)	.480	.092			.365	.094		
Multiple R .271; R sq. .074.					Multiple R.277; R sq. .076.			
Signif. F .000					Signif. F .000			

	GENDER-RACE LIBERALISM				RACIAL CONTACT			
Deseg. Black	.115	.972	.081	.113	-.014	.033	-.022	.668
Female	.333	.039	.261	.000*	-.035	.018	-.062	.050*
Age	.061	.008	.236	.000*	-.011	.004	-.094	.002*
College plans	.110	.046	.077	.017*	.056	.021	.087	.007*
Occupation	.025	.014	.059	.070	-.005	.006	-.024	.461
Report card	.041	.012	.106	.001*	-.000	.006	-.000	.999
Seg. Black	.009	.074	.006	.908	-.170	.034	-.250	.000*
Deseg. White	-.035	.067	-.027	.605	.095	.031	.164	.002*
(Constant)	-.003	.122			.882	.055		
Multiple R .412; R sq. .179.					Multiple R.372; R sq. .138.			
Signif. F .000					Signif. F .000			

Table 4, cont'd.

	SELF ESTEEM				POLITICAL EFFICACY			
Deseg. Black	-.201	.055	-.190	.000*	-.217	.065	-.166	.001*
Female	.000	.029	-.000	.980	.157	.035	.133	.000*
Age	.031	.006	.159	.000*	.070	.007	.285	.000*
College plans	.147	.035	.136	.000*	.212	.041	.159	.000*
Occupation	.009	.010	.028	.397	.002	.012	.006	.860
Report card	.077	.009	.267	.000*	.061	.011	.171	.000*
Seg. Black	-.152	.056	-.133	.007*	-.227	.067	-.161	.001*
Deseg. White	-.222	.051	-.228	.000*	-.076	.060	-.063	.212
(Constant)	.131	.092			-.468	.109		
Multiple R .405; R sq. .164. Signif. R .000					Multiple R.467; R sq. .218. Signif F .000			

Table 5
Summary of Significant Regression Results(1)

	STUDENT SCALES					
	BEHAVIOR			ATTITUDES		
	Pub. Talk	Comm. Volunt.	Race Contact	Race-Gender	Pol. Effic.	Self Esteem
Institutional Variables (Compared to Seg. Whites:						
-Seg. Blacks		+	-	-	-	
-Deseg. Blacks		+	-			-
-Deseg.Whites		+	+			-
Personal Variables						
Occupation		+				
Female		-	-	+	+	
Age	+	-*	-	+	+	+
School Interest						
College plans	+	+		+	+	+
Report card	+	+		+	+	+

1. Beta significance at least .05; their signs are as indicated.
* Signif.=.514.

Table 6
Difference of Means Tests:
School Types and Student Scales(1)

PAIRS OF SCHOOL-TYPES

STUDENT SCALES	DesW DesB	DesW SegW	DesB SegW	DesB SegB	SegW SegB	DesW SegB
Discuss	.800	.332	.269	.620	.150	.442
Volunteer	.951	.382	.421	.223	.074	.214
Race contact	.000***	.000***	.272	.000**	.000***	.000***
Race composite	.369	.002***	.010**	.000***	.118	.000***
Political efficacy	.000***	.008**	.000***	.736	.000***	.000***
Self-esteem	.479	.000***	.000***	.584	.000***	.936
Race-gender liberalism	.017**	.061?	.783	.017**	.051?	.805

1. Separate estimate if significance of F <.05; otherwise, pooled estimate. Signif: *=.05; **=.010; ***=.000; ?=near.05.

Table 7

Larger Mean in Significant School-Type Comparisons(1)

STUDENT SCALES	PAIRS OF SCHOOL-TYPES					
	DesW DesB	DesW SegW	DesB SegW	DesB SegB	SegW SegB	DesW SegB
Discuss	-	-	-	-	-	-
Volunteer	-	-	-	-	-	-
Race contact	DesW**	DesW***	-	DesB***	DesW***	-
Race composite	-	DesW***	DesB**	DesB***	-	DesW***
Political efficacy	DesW***	SegW***	SegW***	-	SegW***	DesW***
Self esteem	-	SegW***	SegW***	-	SegW***	-
Race-gender liberalism	DesB**	SegW?	-	DesB**	SegW*	-

1. Cells without designation lacked significance in t-test; otherwise, designation is the school-type with larger mean. Sig. level: *=.05; **=.010; ***=.000; ?=near .05.

FOOTNOTES

1. Two difficulties arise in using occupation. Children don't possess exact information of this kind in many families, and this is more true the younger the child. As sixth graders were an integral cohort of this study, categories were not provided; instead, the item used was an open-ended question asking for "parents' occupation." These were then categorized into a range of occupations by status, from professional to unemployed; if two occupations were given, the higher status was selected.

The scaling and Ns of the occupations were:
27 Professional-managerial
195 Business (retail trade, business services, self-employed)
47 Agriculture
373 Personal services and operatives
243 "Work" unspecified
82 Unemployed
174 No answer; these were not included in this scaling.

2. In 1990, even in the Panola schools with lowest academic records, 25 went to junior college and 17 to universities. The Southerner Reporter Jan. 24, 1991.

REFERENCES

Almond, Gabriel. 1988. "The Return to the State."American Political Science Review 83: 853-74.

Black, Earl and Merle Black. 1987. Politics and Society in the South. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bobo, Lawrence and Franklin, Jr. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." American Political Science Review 84: 377-94.

Jennings, M. Kent and Richard Niemi. 1974. The Political Character of Adolesence. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Krause, Neal. 1983. "The Racial Context of Black Self-Esteem." Social Psychology Quarterly 46: 98-107.

March, James and Johan Olsen. 1984. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." American Political Science Review 78: 734-49.

McMillen, Neil. 1990. Dark Journey. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Milbrath, Lester and M.L. Goel. 1977. Political Participation. 2d ed. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Nie, Norman, Sidney Verba, and John Petrocik. 1979. The Changing Voter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nordlinger, Eric. 1981.On the Autonomy of the Democratic State. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Nordlinger, Eric; Theodore Lowi; Sergio Fabrini exchange. 1988. "The Return to the State: Critiques." American Political Science Review 82: 875-901.

Peshkin, Alan. 1978. Growing Up American. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Peshkin, Alan. 1990. The Relationship between Culture and Curriculum: A Many Fitting Thing. Urbana: Project Report, National Center for School Leadership, University of Illinois.

Sigel, Roberta and Marilyn Hoskin. 1981. The Political Involvement of Adolescents. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Silver, James. 1964. Mississippi The Closed Society. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Weissberg, Robert. 1974. Political Learning, Political Choice, and Democratic Citizenship. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Wilson, Charles and William Ferris. 1989. Encyclopedia of Southern Culture. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Wirt, Frederick. 1970. Politics of Southern Equality. Chicago: Aldine.

Wirt, Frederick. 1989. "Administrators' Perceptions of Policy Influence: Conflict Management Styles and Roles." Education Administration Quarterly 25: 5-36.

Wirt, Frederick. 1990a. "Do Institutions Matter? Testing Neo-Institutional Theory with Political Cognitions." Paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago.

Wirt, Frederick. 1990b. "Structural Effects upon Cognitive Differences: Desegregation and Non-Academic Outcomes in Mississippi." Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.

Wirt, Frederick. Forthcoming. Law, Attitudes, and Social Change. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.